

TROLLEYBUS

Vol. 63 No. 756

July 2024



The Magazine of the British Trolleybus Society



Marrakech
Bournemouth
Riyadh
Ipswich Transport Museum

TROLLEYBUS

The magazine of the
British Trolleybus Society

No. 756. July 2024

Editor: Dave Chick

23 Pryor Close, Purley on Thames,
Berkshire RG31 6UG
editor@britishtrolley.org.uk

Production Editor:

Peter Braybrooke

6 Tubbenden Lane, Orpington,
Kent BR6 9PN
prodeditor@britishtrolley.org.uk

Preservation News Editor:

Jody White

20 Cunningham Crescent,
Chatham, Kent ME5 0ES
museumnews@britishtrolley.org.uk

World News Editor: Bruce Lake

11 Greenfinch Grove, Netherton,
Huddersfield HD4 7LH
worldnews@britishtrolley.org.uk

Distribution: Derek Pearson

25 Caldbeck Drive, Woodley,
Berkshire RG5 4LA
distribution@britishtrolley.org.uk

Subscriptions and

Membership: Paul Dicken

8 Glan Llyn, Llanfairpwll,
Ynys Môn LL61 5YX
secretary@britishtrolley.org.uk

Website:

<https://www.britishtrolley.org.uk>

Printed by Barden Print, Birkby
Huddersfield. Tel: 01484 422522

*Trolleybus should be regarded as
overdue to subscribers if not
received by the 20th of each
month.*

© The British Trolleybus Society
Registered Charity No. 1033666

BTS NOTICE BOARD

Reading Meetings

Held at the Reading District Oddfellows' Hall, 118b Oxford Road, Reading RG1 7NQ. Admission: Adults £3.00, Juniors £1.50. Non-members £4.00. Meetings commence at 19.30. Organised by the BTS. NTA members welcome.

Meetings Organiser Graham Bilbé, 12 Belle Avenue, Reading RG6 7BL. Email grahamebilbe@btinternet.com

August As usual, there will be no August meeting.

Friday 6 September To be advised. Check the BTS website www.britishtrolley.org.uk for the latest details.

London Meetings

Held at The Model Railway Club, 4 Calshot Street, London N1 9DA (nearest Underground station: King's Cross). See meeting details for start time. Organised by the NTA. BTS members welcome.

Meetings Organiser John Parkin, 59 Beechwood Court, West Street Lane, Carshalton SM5 2QA. Email trolleybus654@aol.com.

Wednesday 17 July The Michael Cleary collection. A selection of photos taken by Michael of British trolleybuses and trolleybus systems throughout the world. Start 1900 – doors open 18.30.

August As usual, there will be no August meeting.

West Midlands Transport Circle

BTS members are invited to attend WMTC meetings, which are held on the second Wednesday of every month at Bradmore Community Centre (Main Hall) in Wolverhampton. Doors Open 19:05, Start presentation : 19:30 prompt!, Break (around) 20:30 - 20:45; Finish 21:45: Out of venue by 22:00 Visitor fee £3.00, just turn up and bring others with you. Organised by Mike Richardes. michael.richardes64@btinternet.com

Wednesday 10 July Subject to be arranged.

Wednesday 14 August Subject to be arranged.

MONTHLY PRIZE DRAW

The winners drawn at the March Reading meeting were:

£50 Mervyn Stedman, Southwick, West Sussex
£40 Simon Guppy, Bristol
£30 Neil Preston, Walsall



Cover photo: Maidstone celebrated its Diamond Jubilee 1904 - 1964 marking "Sixty Years of Public Service" exactly sixty years ago on 14 July 1964. Trolleybus 66 was duly decorated for this occasion.

[Fred Ivey]

Tony Belton adds: Number 1 on the music charts was "It's All Over Now" by The Rolling Stones.

BTS News

Bournemouth 301

Keith Baynton has been making great progress with our MF2B. All ten of the lower deck forward-facing seats have been retrimmed by Dan at Blackpool Trim and a start has been made on



The first of the newly re-covered seat cushions.

installing them. The cushions are in 'cherry red' leather/hide in the original stitch panel style with red edge piping.



The seat cushion after installation.

The cushion foam has been replaced following advice given after an inspection

of the old foam in the sample seat which had been taken to Blackpool. One of the seat cushions needed complete replacement because the plyboard base was badly split.

The driver's seat had become rather scruffy but has now been completely reupholstered at cost using some handy leather off-cuts!

Keith Baynton is arranging the re-chroming for No. 301, including the extra roof vents, and for his own No. 299 from the same batch. The BTS Committee is very grateful to Keith not only for the work he is carrying out, including the delivery of the seats to Blackpool and collection when completed, but also for funding the re-chroming, which will save the Society a substantial sum of money.

South Shields 204

At the end of May, 204 received attention



Graham Bilbé touches up South Shields 204's paintwork on 28 May. [D G Chick]

from Graham Bilbé in preparation for a

return to service. The replacement oil seal was fitted and earth leakage and brake tests were carried out, following which the handbrake was adjusted. It was re-tested and signed off on 14 June.

Some of the paintwork had started to look a little scruffy and good progress was made on touching-up the window sills on both decks. It is hoped that some of the black lining which requires attention will be completed during June.

Glasgow TB78

Some hard work was put in during Sandtoft's week-long public opening in late May. Francis Whitehead sanded the ceiling panels ready for painting and



Preparations are being made for Bournemouth 301's window installation.

Dave Hall made excellent progress cleaning the seats.

Thanks to Keith Baynton and Graham Bilbe for these reports.

An Addition to the Editorial Team

I would like to welcome Dave Hall back to the Trolleybus editorial team. From this edition Dave is Assistant Editor, sharing some of the workload in producing our monthly magazine.

Dave will be well known to members as the Society's Archivist and as the author of the definitive history of Reading's trolleybus system, published by Trolleybooks in 2018.
DGC

Peter Short

We are very sad to report that our Webmaster, Peter Short, died suddenly on 14 May. Peter was a life member of the Society and in 2013 set up the Society's website and the associated membership system. More recently he worked closely with Paul Dicken on the major revamp of the website.

Originally hailing from South Shields, Peter was delighted to be able to drive South Shields 204 on a Trolleybus Driving Experience at Sandtoft a few years ago.

Peter had many interests, including volunteering at the IBM Hursley Museum at Hursley Park, where he was a curator. The website which Peter spent many years working on as part of his volunteer work has been preserved, including a message written by his fellow museum curators:

<https://ibmhursleymuseum.info>

Our condolences to Peter's family.
DGC

Riding the Marrakech Trolleybus

Francis Terry reports on his recent visit

Marrakech, a principal city of northern Morocco, has a single trolleybus route which opened on 29 September 2017. The operator is Automoviles Luarca SA (ALSA) which also runs the bus network in Marrakech and some other Moroccan cities. The company is based at Asturias in Spain and linked with Mobico, formerly known as National Express.

The trolleybus route starts at Bab Doukala, a gateway in the ancient city walls and runs for 8km out to Massira. Only about 3 km at the outer end of the route is wired, battery traction being used for the inner section as well as for turning manoeuvres and depot runs from the Massira terminus; consequently the overhead is devoid of frogs and crossings. Bab Doukala is an interchange with bus routes serving other parts of the city, although there is no recognisable trolleybus stop there. Trolleys seem to just pull in to the side of the road opposite the gateway, unload and reload with passengers before performing the terminal working round a large roundabout.

From here, they follow a more or less dead straight alignment for almost the entire length of the route, running mostly in a dedicated carriageway in the centre of the road and partly segregated from other traffic by raised kerbs. Stops are identifiable by short, slightly raised platforms with sections of low decorative ironwork fence to shield passengers from other road traffic. There are virtually no bus stop standards of the conventional type. Where there is a standard, for example by the main post office building, the trolleybus route is lettered A, but vehicles show BRT1 (for 'bus rapid transit') in the destination display. The Massira terminus is in the dedicated carriageway in the middle of the road just before a roundabout. Here, trolleybuses lower their poles before proceeding either to the

depot down a side road to the right, or round the roundabout to take up their inward working. The inward wiring is equipped with re-wiring pans. Pans are also found at the stop where overhead wiring commences on the outbound run.

The fleet consists of ten Dongfeng Yangtse Veyron G52 rigid battery trolleybuses, delivered for the opening of the line. They are a dual-door, low-floor design with air conditioning. Passengers board through the front door and pay the driver; exit is through the centre doors. The fare is a flat-rate 4 dirhams (about 30p). According to a Wikipedia article, a fleet of 20 more trolleybuses were on order when the system opened; these were to be 18-metre articulateds, but as yet there is no sign of them.

My first attempt to visit the Marrakech route, in 2018, was a disappointment as technical problems meant that trolleys were running only on battery for many months. After a resumption of bi-mode service, there was then another lengthy period of battery-only operation and with the advent of Covid-19, no further developments have taken place. A second visit on 6 May 2024, found two out of the scheduled three trolleybuses working, on a roughly 20-minute frequency. The service was well used, especially at peak times, although whether it has yet reached the expected level of 60,000 passengers a day must be doubtful. The ride was smooth and rapid – as one might expect – and thankfully free of congestion owing to the dedicated right-of-way. My overall impression was favourable, but the absence of bus stop standards takes some getting used to and the service is not very reliable. In a way, Marrakech is more like an electric bus route with in-motion charging rather than a conventional trolleybus route.

Page 126, upper: On the unwired section of the Marrakech trolleybus route, No. 05 in the fleet pauses at the central post office stop, one of the very few to be provided with a proper bus stop standard.

Page 126, lower. No. 05 stands at the Massira terminus of route A with poles raised to charge its batteries. The depot is a short way down the road running off the roundabout in the centre-left in the picture. Note the rewiring pans on the inbound wires, which will be used when No 05 has performed the terminal working around the roundabout.

Page 127, upper: A Dongfeng Yangtse trolleybus on the dedicated BRT carriageway. The lightweight overhead design and kerbs segregating trolleys from other traffic can be clearly seen.





Right: A close-up view of the central post office stop, showing route diagram, fare information and timetable. French is widely used in Marrakech for notices and official information.

خريطة الخط A

Plan de ligne A

Terminus MASSIRA
نهاية المسيرة

Station TAFILALTY
محطة تافيلالت

Station DIRM
محطة ديرم

Station DOUAR LAKRAJ
محطة دووار لأكراج

Station AIN MEGHAYEN
محطة عين مغيان

Station GARE FERROVIAIRE
محطة القطار

Station GRANDE PORTE GUELIZ
محطة باب القلعة

TERMINUS BAB DOUKALA
نهاية باب القلعة

Direction	Arrêt	Temps de trajet (min)	Temps de marche (min)
Vers Terminus MASSIRA	Terminus MASSIRA	0	0
	Station TAFILALTY	5	5
	Station DIRM	10	10
	Station DOUAR LAKRAJ	15	15
	Station AIN MEGHAYEN	20	20
Vers Terminus BAB DOUKALA	Terminus BAB DOUKALA	0	0
	Station GARE FERROVIAIRE	5	5
	Station GRANDE PORTE GUELIZ	10	10
	Station DOUAR LAKRAJ	15	15
	Station DIRM	20	20

Prix de ticket
سعر التذكرة
4 Dirhams
4 دراهم

BUS CITY
MOTAJADIA

جهة مراكش أسفي
Région Marrakech Safi

Book Review

Bill and Jim, subtitled "A London Trolleybus Crew".



A4 Hardback
297 x 210mm

208 pages, 361
photographs and 8
pages of colour

ISBN
978-1-910654-38-5

Published by Adam
Gordon Price £35.00

A strange title for a photographic book about London's trolleybuses but then this is perhaps a break from the normal. Yes, there is a vast number of photos, mainly black and white with a number full page, each with very detailed captions. However, this book records the day-to-day operation of Britain's largest trolleybus system, mainly through the eyes of Hugh Taylor, who was there, in company with a good collection of photographers to record what actually happened to provide the service for passengers.

Bill and Jim were a trolleybus crew based at Wood Green Depot in North London and Hugh had got to know them and shared in their working lives. Needless

to say these men had a much more complex job than mere bus crews, the driver needing to observe the overhead with its complexities and the conductor pulling frog handles, whilst both had to play their part with the bamboo pole. The trolleybus crew also relied on the overhead linesmen to attend to any problems on the road, whilst the inside staff had to deal with turntables, traversers and trolleyheads.

Whilst studying the photos, the reader is suddenly confronted with a few pages of detailed text. You start to read and you learn more and more about a typical trolleybus crew and how an enthusiast could be part of that working environment.

Books from compiler Hugh Taylor and publisher Adam Gordon are always full of the most intricate of detail and the photo coverage is first class, with many showing unusual workings, different overhead layouts and of course the occasional dewirement. Blinds, timecards and farecharts are covered. Hugh was there as the last trolleys entered the depot and as they made their way for storage, scrapping or for further service. The book is highly recommended to those who knew the London system and those who look back with affection at a long gone London.

John Parkin

Available from BTS Sales



World News (see page 138) São
Paulo's pre-series e-Trol. [Eletra]

A Tour of Bournemouth 60 Years Ago

Article and photographs by Tony Belton

The Reading Transport Society had a lovely tour of Bournemouth, using open-topper number 200, sixty years ago on 28 June 1964. The cost per person was four shillings and sixpence, which was a bargain even in those days!

Open-top 200, a Sunbeam MS2 with Park Royal body, was rebuilt from 157 in 1958. Unfortunately my camera, which was

less than five years old, broke down at the beginning of the tour so I only took one photo - illustrated. To compensate I am showing photos of 200 in service on different occasions.

Number 1 on the music charts was
"It's Over"
by Roy Orbison



Above. Bournemouth 200, on the tour, has stopped for photographs at Queens Park Golf Pavilion terminus, Holdenhurst Road.

Page 130, upper: 200 is at the terminus in Castle Lane West, Moordown, just west of Lawford Road, before running in normal passenger service on route 36 to Bournemouth Square.

Page 130, lower: 200, in normal passenger service on route 32, circumnavigates the Castle Lane/ Holdenhurst Road roundabout at Cooper Dean which was constructed in 1963.

Page 131, upper: 200, on its regular route 39, leaves the Lansdowne and makes its way southwest along Bath Road to Bournemouth Pier.





Riyadh's Trolleybuses
Article overleaf



Riyadh's Trolleybuses

Words and photographs by David Bowler

There are but two trolleybus systems in the Middle East, Teheran, about which little is known for obvious reasons, and Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, which I was fortunate to be able to visit in October 2023.

Located some 25kms northeast of Riyadh city centre is the huge campus of the King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences which, since its opening in April 2013, has been served by an internal trolleybus route linking the various buildings and faculties. The sole route is a 4km long double line built along private roads having no other traffic and with turning circles at each end. There are ten stops, each with its own air-conditioned waiting room equipped with timetable information screens and raised loading

platforms. Trolleybuses operate every 5 minutes in each direction between 07.00 and 19.30 Monday to Thursday.

Services are provided by a fleet of twelve 19 metre long LT20 articulated trolleybuses built by Viseon Bus of Germany with Vossloh-Kiepe electrical equipment in 2011. Although the body is not divided into separate compartments, male passengers travel in the front section of the trolleybus and females travel in the rear. About 300 metres beyond the easternmost stop is a turning circle and a large depot in a non-accessible fenced-off area, and although access is wired, trolleybuses de-pole here and turn or proceed to the depot building using their diesel auxiliary.





Page 131, lower: A view from the front of one of the trolleybuses.
 Page 132: Two of the vehicles with their booms down.
 Above: A nearside view showing the door layout.
 Below: The substation is seen in the background.



MUSEUM & PRESERVATION NEWS

Edited by Jody White



Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft

Sandtoft's Next Events

Saturday 13 – Sunday 14 July Weekend Open Days featuring a display of classic Atkinson lorries

Saturday 27 July Sandtoft Gathering Preview Open 12.00 – 17.30

Sunday 28 July Sandtoft Gathering Open 10.00 – 17.30 Displays of visiting buses and cars with entertainment, a beer tent – and more! Premium event.

Saturday 10 – Sunday 11 August Weekend Open Days

Saturday 24, Sunday 25, Monday 26 August Bank Holiday Open Days featuring the trolleybuses of the British Trolleybus Society

Tuesday 27 – Friday 30 August Weekday opening

The Cedes replica was thoroughly checked at the end of May. Ian Metcalfe fixed the brake master cylinder and Graham Bilbé



Graham Bilbé chats to passengers on the Cedes replica about the history of the original vehicle and the replica. [DG Chick]

oiled round all the available moving parts, checked wheelnuts etc, and inspected the chassis. All appears to be satisfactory at present. Consequently, it was used for public trips on 28 May and was very popular with the public.

The original vehicle had been Keighley No. 0, renumbered 50 in 1921. Although it was licenced until 31 December 1924, in his history of Keighley Corporation Transport Stanley King records that it was assumed that after 1914 the vehicle was confined to the Sutton route, which closed on 23 May 1924. Although we don't know exactly when No. 50 was withdrawn the replica ran in service at Sandtoft on the closest date possible to the centenary of the theoretical withdrawal date of the original.

Cardiff & South Wales Trolleybus Project

The report from the Welsh outpost of



Cardiff 262. The front hub, showing the four studs that require renewing. [Keith Walker]

trolleybus restoration in Barry will be limited due to group members being away through illness and work being concentrated on long-running jobs.

On our decker 262, John Webb continues the lengthy task of final fitting of the hardwood trim around the windows. This will be a continuous process, as John has many more windows to complete on the upper deck before he moves to the lower deck. As mentioned in the last report, the wheels for both vehicles had received the replacement tyres, so those assigned to



*The new studs as received from the supplier.
[Keith Walker]*



*The condition of the inner surface of the brake drums which are offsite for machining.
[Keith Walker]*



*A front pair of newly relined front shoes for 243.
[Keith Walker]*

262 had their wheelrims cleaned by Andy Tsenti for painting of their inner surfaces.

Moving on to our "Doodlebug" 243 we continue to concentrate on the examination of its brake shoes and brake drums. From our last report, its front pair of shoes were taken for relining, which have now been refitted. With all the brake drums off their inner surfaces, the rear drums were inspected, with the result that two of the

four were found in need of machining and are presently off site.

Keith Walker

The National Tramway Museum

Model Tram, Bus and Railway Exhibition
A Model Tram, Bus and Railway Exhibition will be held at the National Tramway Museum, Crich Tramway Village, Crich, Derbyshire on

Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 August,
10am to 5pm on both days.

Eleven layouts will be present at the Exhibition.

Event organiser, John Huddleston said: "The Model Tram, Bus and Railway Exhibition has grown in popularity every year since we started it, and we are attracting new models again this year". Normal museum entry charges apply. For details visit: www.tramway.co.uk or telephone: 01773 854321.

The National Tramway Museum, Crich Tramway Village, Crich, Derbyshire. DE4 5DP

Ipswich Transport Museum's Heathman Tower Wagon

Article and photographs by Stephen Cobb

Tower wagons were one of the important support vehicles used in the maintenance of the overhead wiring - and a number of these vehicles, from many manufacturers, have also survived into preservation.

In the case of Ipswich Corporation, the original horse-drawn (1902) one from tramway days - later used as a trailer behind a motor vehicle until 1963 - and the 1948 AEC Monarch with Eagle bodywork - can be found at the Ipswich Transport Museum. The 1922 Ransomes "Orwell" electric one is in LTPS ownership at Carlton Colville.

However, there is a little known fourth survivor at the ITM, overlooked because it has yet to be restored and isn't currently on display - not helped by the fact it is man-powered rather than mechanical!

Unfortunately, we know very little of its history, as it first came to our attention as late as 1993 when it was discovered being used by the local Lions Club in Felixstowe to erect the Christmas decorations. It was stored at the local telephone exchange when not in use. Having members who worked for BT at the time was most probably how we found it!

It eventually arrived at the Museum in September 1999 and spent some time on exhibition in the main display hall in unrestored state - before being unceremoniously relegated to outside storage in the back yard, where it remained until early last year.

With last year's Centenary of the start of trolleybus operations in 1923, it was decided to try and find out a bit more about it and also move it into covered storage - something which happened last spring, so it's now out of the elements again, pending a full restoration at some point.

The vehicle was manufactured by Heathman Ltd of 10 Parsons Green, London, SW, their offices being located on Parsons Green with the factory seemingly

being in Rectory Road, Parsons Green. There is a cast builder's plate attached to the "handcart" part of the wagon that shows the postal district as SW 6 - Indicating it was built post 1917 when the districts were divided numerically.

We think it was purchased by Ipswich Corporation Electric Supply & Transport in the early 1920s, just as the changeover to trolleybuses started and the network began to expand; so it is likely to be contemporary with the "Orwell" tower wagon of 1922. Remnants of the ICES&T red livery can still be seen on it though we have been unable to find any trace of lettering to confirm this - so far.

Research has confirmed that this type of manual tower, from the very same manufacturer, was used by contractors to erect the original tramway overhead wires in 1903.

It must have been quite a job manhandling the thing through the streets when in use, with its two "bicycle" style spoked wheels; but it does seem well balanced when we've had to move it around at the Museum. It certainly appears to have been used for both street lighting and trolleybus overhead works during its life; but just how long it lasted in use, and what happened to it between then and the 1980's, isn't clear.

The woodwork is in surprisingly good condition for its age, and only one piece has been identified as needing replacement, though the wheels are going to be another matter. They are of metal spoked construction which is very sound, but finding suitable pneumatic tyres of that size may be a problem.

Hopefully in the next few years, a full restoration will be undertaken on it and it can go on display alongside our 1923 Railless trolleybus as it was most probably used to erect the wiring for that to operate when new.

Right: An advertisement for Heathman's products.



Left: The tower wagon when it was stored externally.

Right: The cast builder's plate attached to the 'handcart' part of the wagon that shows the postal district as SW6.



World News

Edited by Bruce Lake



AUSTRIA Innsbruck

See under Salzburg (below) for news of the joint tender with Salzburg.

AUSTRIA Linz

The operator has exercised an option to acquire nine double-articulated Van Hool Exqui.City 24T trolleybuses. However, given the insolvency and sale of Van Hool it appears unlikely that they will be delivered.

AUSTRIA Salzburg

Eight new Hess LightTrams (BGT-N1D Nos. 443-450) are expected during the summer. The vehicles are identical to the 42 already delivered to aid spare parts management. All Van Hool AG-300Ts without auxiliary power units are to be withdrawn by the end of 2024. 263 and 270 have already been deregistered, the others being 262, 267, 271, 274 and 277. Due to Van Hool's insolvency, all retired vehicles will remain as spare parts donors for the remaining vehicles.

The tender procedure for 60 vehicles for Salzburg and 20 vehicles for Innsbruck as a framework agreement on vehicle delivery and maintenance without call-off obligation, which is currently in the bidding phase, was to be concluded at the beginning of July with a contract awarded to the best bidder. After that, a design phase is planned to be able to call up vehicles quickly in the event of any line expansions. There is a call-off option for 12m, 18.75m and 24.7m vehicles.

BRAZIL São Paulo

The first pre-series trolleybus for a planned procurement by the operator Metra for EMTU's suburban network has been completed and has been delivered to EMTU by the local

manufacturer consortium Mercedes Benz (chassis), CAIO (body), Eletra (electrical equipment) and WEG (engine). It is currently being tested. *[Note there is a picture of this impressive looking trolleybus on page 128].*

It is planned to purchase 92 of these 21.5m four-axle low-floor battery-equipped "e-Trol" trolleybuses which can carry a total of 146 passengers (including 60 seated) for use on the future 17.5km BRT line between Sao Bernardo do Campo and Sacoma (interchange point to metro line 2). The vehicles will be equipped with left-hand doors, as all stops along the new line will have central platforms.

In the meantime, all Busscar Urbanuss low-floor trolleybuses from 2002/3 have been retired due to damage to the rear-axle drive. Ten articulated Mercedes-Benz/CAIO diesel buses have been converted into trolleybuses.

CANADA Vancouver

TransLink has published a tender with a deadline of 30 July that is intended to significantly expand electric public transport without having to expand the overhead network to the same extent. It provides for one pre-production and 106 production cars of 12m length as a firm order, with options for up to 201 12m cars and one pre-series and up to 203 18m articulated production cars. All will have a traction battery pack. If all options were to be exercised, the number of trolleybuses would almost double compared to the current fleet of 262 vehicles. Expressions of interest from the manufacturers New Flyer and Solaris, among others, are expected.

CZECH REPUBLIC Brno

The first battery trolleybus line was introduced on 27 April. Previously the 30 battery-equipped trolleybuses have only been used for diversions, but trolleybus line 30 has been extended, now running in battery mode via Královo Pole, nádraží to the village of Soběšice, replacing the former bus line 43. This extends the 8.5 km line 30 by about 5.6 km, running on battery power for almost 40% of its total length.

Twenty more battery-powered trolleybuses have been called off from the framework agreement for delivery by 2025, to enable possible extensions of the trolleybus lines in the area of Slatina, Černovické terasy and to the airport.

CZECH REPUBLIC Praha

The Office for the Protection of Competition (ÚOHS) rejected the complaint by the unsuccessful bidder (Škoda Electric), but the contract with Bozankaya had still not been signed by the end of May. See under TURKEY Industry for more details

CZECH REPUBLIC Ústí nad Labem

On 1 May, Ústí nad Labem joined the ranks of cities with regular battery trolleybus operation after a major transformation of urban transport, having received 21 new Škoda 27 TrNU battery trolleybuses in recent months, adding to the nine already owned.

GERMANY Solingen

On 7 May the successful completion of the project to increase emission-free public transport through the use of battery trolleybuses (BOBs) and intelligent charging infrastructure was celebrated with a ceremony at the Solingen station forecourt

in Ohlgs which was attended by the transport ministers of the federal and state governments. The project was launched in April 2017 and was completed with the formal opening of lines 691 and 694, which have been electrified since January 2024. The all-electric share of local public transport is now 76%.

State Minister Oliver Krischer, congratulated the city and the municipal utilities for maintaining, developing and committing to the trolleybus system over the years. Not all of the 32 battery-equipped trolleybuses are in operation yet. Of the eight 12m trolleybuses scheduled for delivery at the end of 2023, only one has been in operation since April and three more (209, 211, 214) had been delivered by the end of May.

Of the 31 trolleybuses with auxiliary drive available at the beginning of 2024, Van Hools 256 and 257 dating from 2002/3 were withdrawn in January and April respectively.

14 VanHool and 15 Hess SwissTrolleys with diesel generators remain in operation. These are to be replaced by 24 new battery-equipped trolleybuses in the next few years. The number of vehicles has been reduced according to the actual need for the existing trolleybus lines. An award of the tender for 30 units published in March 2023 is expected in the coming weeks. The oldest diesel articulated buses will be replaced by new diesel buses in 2025.

LITHUANIA Vilnius

During May the CEO of operator VVT together with civic officials visited the Škoda works in Plzeň to inspect and ride on the first of the new Škoda 32 Trs. At the time, 20 had been assembled with five fully completed and the other 15 undergoing trial operations and final adjustments.

Subsequently, the first of the batch was delivered on 9 June, with delivery of all 20 vehicles being completed in August. Another 20 vehicles are currently in production.

The contract with VVT includes the delivery of a total of 91 Škoda 32 Tr trolleybuses, valued at over EUR 52 million. This order also includes a contract for the supply of spare parts needed for regular maintenance during the first five years of operation.

NETHERLANDS Arnhem

Battery trolleybus line 352 started operations on 12 May, with the ceremonial opening taking place on 22 May.

A further extension of the line to Ede station is planned. The battery share of line 352 from Osterbeek to Wageningen and back is just under 23 km. Once wired, the performance of the 92 kWh battery drops to 40% in cold weather. During the approximately 5.5 km journey to the station, the battery can be fully recharged.

Although it had previously been suggested that there would be special events to mark the 75th anniversary of trolleybus operation in September, no plans have yet been announced. It is possible that the depot will host an open doors day.

ROMANIA Târgu Jiu

As well as the delivery of 35 Solaris Trollino 12s (17 of which were "classic" trolleybuses and 18 equipped with batteries), which completely renewed the trolleybus fleet by June 2023, the overhead was also completely renewed in 2023 as part of the EU project and work on renovating the depot was due for completion by 30 June.

During the renovation work, an old factory site in the south of the city has been rented as a parking area. Since it is not connected to the overhead network, only the 18 battery-powered trolleybuses are currently in use. The last six trolleybuses without a battery drive (TG-JIU 1725-1730) have not yet entered service.

At the "9 Mai" terminus the overhead on Strada 9 Mai has been extended by about 600m to the roundabout with Strada Termocentralei, and the junction to the terminus "9 Mai" in Strada

Săvinești has now received a switch.

So far, no funnels have been installed in the overhead so the drivers wire up manually. The battery-powered trolleybuses also run on some bus lines, for example, on the Dragoieni line, only about 1.7 km will run under overhead lines from the "9 Mai" terminus to the stop in front of the Strada Republicii 5 building, to Preajba and Dragoieni and back to the "9 Mai" terminus, 24 km will then be driven in battery mode.

SLOVAKIA Prešov

SOR TNS 12 trolleybus No. 801 commenced the next stage of the homologation process in June, which involves 5000km of test operation with passengers. Correction. Last month's feature on the operator's new trolleybuses incorrectly stated that there are four motor bus services, numbered 29, 32, 32A and 39. In fact, there are 33 bus services but operation of the battery-equipped trolleybuses will be prioritised on the 29, 32, 32A and 39. Thanks to DPMP for this correction.

TURKEY Industry

The Turkish company Bozankaya officially presented its new "SNG" range of vehicles at the Busworld trade fair in Istanbul on 29 May.

The manufacturer recently successfully tendered for the supply of up to 70 SNG trolleybuses for Praha (see above for outcome)

At least one 12m trolleybus has been produced to the SNG design and it is expected that this vehicle will be transported to Prague when the contract is signed.

Bozankaya manufactured the fleet of trolleybuses now in use in Malatya, Turkey.

With thanks to: Busportal, Dave Chick, Československý Dopravák, Plzeňské Trolejbusy, sustainable-bus.com, Škoda Group, Jan Spousta, Trolleybus Trollino, Trolley:motion, Urban Transport Magazine

Rear cover: Three of the new Škoda 32 Trs for Vilnius are seen during the visit by a party from the Lithuanian capital in May. [Škoda Group]

